

Krush Adds Bennoui, Ezbiri to 67kg Tournament

Written by Sam Sattler

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Krush held a fan event in Tokyo yesterday, hosting promotional stars Yuta Kubo, Masaaki Noiri, Shota Takiya and Yasuhiro Kido, among others. However, the focus wasn't entirely on the fighters at the event, as Krush made a series of important announcements for their first two cards in 2013.

Firstly, Krush announced two more participants for their 67kg tournament, adding European fighters Abdallah Ezbiri and Houcine Bennoui. Ezbiri made his Krush debut at Krush.19 back in June, giving Yuta Kubo one of his harder fights in recent times and being the only one of Kubo's last 5 opponents to hear the final bell. Bennoui, whose brother makes his promotional debut at Krush.25 in December, is another in the long list of French fighters who have invaded Krush over the last year. He holds notable wins over Singmanee Kaewsamrit, Lumpinee Stadium champion Damien Alamos, Mosab Amrani and former Kubo opponent Charles Francois. With the inclusion of these two and the assumed inclusion of Makihira Keita, only one spot remains open. Should Krush choose to fill that spot with a Japanese fighter, Yuya Yamato would be a great final piece to a tournament that is already packed with young talent.

Krush also announced two big fights for their January 14th card, pitting 2011 Youth GP champion Masaaki Noiri against M-1 Super Lightweight champion Makoto Nishiyama. Nishiyama has made his way around the Lightweight circuit in Japan, but at 35 he still lacks a signature win, dropping fights to Hiroki Ishii, Ryuji Kajiwara, Tetsuya Yamato and Kanongsuk Weerasakreck. A win over Noiri would definitely be a career best, but at this stage in his career and on a 2-fight losing streak that dates back to over 2 years ago, Nishiyama will be a massive underdog. Also announced for the card is Krush 55kg champion Shota Takiya taking on Andy Howson. Takiya has held his place atop the 55kg division since April 2011 when he won the Krush tournament and has been an unstoppable force since. Howson made his Krush debut back in August at Krush.21 where he faced Nobuchika Terado for the ISKA Bantamweight title. Howson looked like he was on his way to winning that fight after dropping Terado twice, but Terado stormed back and dropped Howson 3 times to force a stoppage. This fight, on paper, is absolute fireworks, with Takiya being just as prone to brawling as Terado. However, Howson will have to make some adjustments as Takiya is faster and hits harder than Terado.

Moving on to the January 26th card which hosts the beginning of the 58kg tournament, the aforementioned Nobuchika Terado, as well as Yoshihiro Sato, were at the event to announce their participation for that card. Terado hinted at moving up to 58kg to compete in the tournament, though nothing is confirmed. Should Sato take (and win) a string of fights in Krush,

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a rematch with Yasuhiro Kido would be very possible and likely entertaining. The only announced fight for that card is a 70kg title match between champion Yasuhiro Kido and Takuro Moriya, assuming Kido doesn't suffer any lasting injuries in K-1 next month.